

REMARKS

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

To place the subject application in better form, the specification has been amended to correct minor informalities. Also, a new abstract is presented in accordance with preferred practice. No new matter has been added by these changes.

Claims 1-4, 6-12 and 21-30 are presented for consideration. Claims 1 and 21 are independent. Claims 5 and 13-20 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 2 and 6 have been amended to clarify features of the subject invention, while new claims 21-30 have been added to recite additional features of the subject invention. Support for these changes and these claims can be found in the original application, as filed. Therefore, no new matter has been added.

Applicant reserves the right to file a divisional application directed to the subject matter of claims 13-19, previously withdrawn from consideration, which have been now canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Applicant notes with appreciation that claims 5 and 8 have been indicated as containing allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. To expedite allowance of this application, the subject matter of claim 5 has been substantively incorporated in independent claim 1. Applicant submits, therefore, that independent claim 1 should be deemed allowable at the outset. Further, claims 2-4 and 6-12, variously depending from independent claim 1, likewise should be deemed allowable. In addition, Applicant has rewritten dependent

claim 8 as new independent claim 21. The Examiner will note that independent claim 21 substantively includes the features previously recited in independent claim 1 and dependent claims 6 and 8. Applicant, therefore, also submits that independent claim 21 should be deemed allowable at the outset. Still further, claims 22-30, variously depending from independent claim 1, likewise should be deemed allowable at the outset.

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action.

Claim 7 was objected to due to a minor informality. Specifically, the Examiner asserted that a word is misspelled in line 2 of this claim. Applicant has reviewed the claim 7 as originally filed and is unable to locate this misspelling. Accordingly, Applicant has made no change to original claim 7.

Turning now to the art rejections, claims 1-4 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,886,432 to Markle. Claims 1, 7, 9 and 10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,147,42 to Takita et al. Claims 1 and 12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by the Markle patent. Claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the Markle patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,339,266 to Tanaka. Applicant submits that the cited art, whether taken individually or in combination, does not teach or suggest many features of the present invention as previously recited in claims 1-12. Therefore, these rejections are respectfully traversed.

Nevertheless, as discussed above, to expedite allowance of this application, Applicant has substantively incorporated the subject matter of claim 5 in independent claim 1, and has rewritten dependent claim 8 in independent form to include the recitations of prior claims 1 and 6, as new independent claim 21. Applicant submits, therefore, that independent claims 1 and 21, as well as 2-4 and 6-12, variously depending from independent claim 1, and claims 22-30, variously depending from independent claim 21, should be deemed allowable. All pending claims being allowable, Applicant submits that the instant application is in condition for allowance.

Applicant requests that the Examiner contact his undersigned representative should any matters be deemed outstanding precluding allowance of this application.

Applicant submits that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,



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